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A REPORT ON NON-DEGREE-CREDIT COURSES AND PROGRAMS OFFERED BY THE PUBLIC TWO-YEAR COLLEGES IN NEW YORK STATE.

BY- MCKINNEY, ROBERT

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A 12-ITEM QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING NON-DEGREE-CREDIT COURSES WAS SENT TO EACH OF THE 34 PUBLIC 2-YEAR COLLEGES IN NEW YORK. OF THE 26 RESPONDENTS, 20 OR MORE INDICATED THAT THEY (1) OFFERED REMEDIAL COURSES DESIGNED AS PREPARATION FOR ENROLLMENT IN CERTAIN DEGREE CREDIT COURSES, (2) DID NOT OFFER NONCREDIT ENRICHMENT COURSES FOR SUPERIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, (3) DID NOT OFFER NONCREDIT COURSES DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS OR OTHER DISADVANTAGED GROUPS, (4) OFFERED SUCH COURSES IN PROFESSIONAL, TECHNICAL, OR VOCATIONAL FIELDS, AND 14 OF THESE AWARDED CERTIFICATES FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION, (5) DID NOT OFFER NONCREDIT COURSES IN THE HUMANITIES OR SOCIAL SCIENCES, (6) DID NOT OFFER COURSES FOR SPECIAL COMMUNITY GROUPS, (7) EXPECTED INCREASED DEMANDS FOR NONCREDIT COURSES TO BE OFFERED BY THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN GENERAL AND BY THEIR COLLEGES IN PARTICULAR, AND (8) CONSIDERED THE EXPECTED TREND TO BE DESIRABLE. THE AUTHOR CONCLUDED THAT THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE WILLING, WITHIN LIMITS, TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR NONCREDIT COURSES AND PROGRAMS, THAT THIS RESPONSIBILITY IS ASSUMED LARGELY IN THE EVENING PROGRAMS, AND THAT THE ADMINISTRATORS REGARD THE OFFERING OF A WIDE RANGE OF NONCREDIT COURSES AS A PROPER AND DESIRABLE FUNCTION OF 2-YEAR COLLEGES. (WO)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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A REPORT ON NON-DEGREE-CREDIT COURSES AND PROGRAMS OFFERED BY THE PUBLIC TWO-YEAR COLLEGES IN NEW YORK STATE

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By
Robert McKinney, Executive Dean
Dutchess Community College
Poughkeepsie, New York
January 1965

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I. PURPOSE OF STUDY

Any society which is generating social and technological changes, both knowingly and unknowingly, at the accelerating rate currently seen in the United States may be expected to press many of its educational agencies into the inescapable struggle of social readjustment, occupational retooling, and general educational upgrading. The pressure manifests itself in diverse ways, and demands for action come from many quarters.

Social philosophers, planners, curriculum specialists, spokesmen for philanthropic foundations, government officials and others sound the alarm and call for new services, courses, and curriculums in addition to drastic revisions of existing ones. Educational institutions whose roles have been defined and reinforced by a long history may remain somewhat oblivious to the call for action; still others may be so remote from communities in the throes of transition that they will not be pressed into battle. However, institutions too young to have acquired the armor of restricted purposes and restrictive traditions will certainly be vulnerable to the demands for assistance, particularly if they are close to or identified with dynamic and changing communities.

The public two-year colleges of New York State constitute a group of educational institutions which would be placed in the latter category. More than half of them have been founded in the last ten years. All of them, including the six older Agricultural and Technical Colleges, have stressed responsiveness to community needs in their statements of purpose. Most of them, in their youthful eagerness to prove their worth, have responded positively to a variety of requests for educational services and programs.

The resultant proliferation of curriculum, courses, and activities and the prospects for a continuation of the process have led some two-year college educators to regard the trend with some concern. One aspect of this development relates to non-degree-credit courses and their place in the educational program of a public two-year college.

Since the trustees, administration, and faculty must have a clear view of their college's purposes and range of functions if they are to design an appropriate program, the matter of non-degree-credit courses is extremely pertinent. It has a bearing on a variety of interesting and provocative questions

some of which are listed below:

1. Are there certain minimum standards of intellectual rigor, discipline, and prior achievement which should characterize all courses offered by an institution properly calling itself a college?

2. Should the public two-year college restrict its degree programs to those for which only the superior high school graduates may qualify?

3. Should the public two-year college serve all persons over eighteen years of age who are interested in serious study regardless of their previous academic achievement?

4. Should a college offer remedial instruction for students or should such work be done in the high schools?

5. Should a public two-year college distinguish among vocational, technical, and academic courses?

6. Is vocational education a proper function of a college?

7. To what extent may an institution impair the quality of degree-credit offerings by the allocation of resources for non-degree-credit courses?

8. What priority should two-year colleges give to non-degree-credit courses when confronted by limitations of physical facilities or financial resources?

9. Must a public two-year college confine its activities to certain predetermined types if it is to achieve an identity and preserve its integrity?

10. To what extent does the urgency of educational needs in the United States today demand that the public two-year college be comprehensive in the broadest sense of the term?

With the preceding questions suggesting the relevance of non-degree-credit courses to the future role of these colleges, a survey and analysis of such courses presently being offered by New York's public two-year colleges appeared to be a logical first step in the proper examination of the issues involved. What follows is the account of the writer's attempt to gather and interpret significant data on the subject.

II. METHOD

A three-page questionnaire was prepared and sent to the presidents or academic deans of the 34 public two-year colleges in New York State. The questionnaire included 12 items, 9 of which sought factual information and 3 of which sought opinions of the respondents.

Twenty-six institutions completed the questionnaire and returned it in time to be included in this report; they are listed in Appendix C.

For the purpose of the study a non-degree-credit course or program was defined as "any organized learning experience directed by one or more full or part-time faculty members of the college and carrying no credit toward an A.A. or A.A.S. degree".

The data are summarized item by item in the following section.

III. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Item I. <u>DO YOU OFFER NON-CREDIT REMEDIAL COURSES DESIGNED TO HELP STUDENTS REMOVE DEFICIENCIES OR GAIN NECESSARY STUDY SKILLS PRIOR TO ENROLLMENT IN CERTAIN DEGREE-CREDIT COURSES</u>?

To this question there were 20 "yes" and 6 "no" responses.

There was no discernible pattern of responses from the Agricultural and Technical Colleges, the original technical institutes, or the newer community colleges.

Most of the institutions answering "yes" offer courses in reading, English, and mathematics. Six have non-credit science courses.

Eight institutions make such courses available in their regular day program while the others offer them through evening and/or summer sessions.

Item 2. DO YOU MAKE AVAILABLE TO DEGREE CANDIDATES OTHER NON-CREDIT COURSES WHICH ARE NOT REMEDIAL IN NATURE?

To this question there were 8 "yes" and 18 "no" responses.

Among such courses offered are three in typing, one in speed reading, one in music, and one in speech correction.

Item 3. DO YOU OFFER NON-CREDIT ENRICHMENT COURSES OR PROGRAMS FOR SUPERIOR OR ESPECIALLY INTERESTED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS?

To this question there were 6 "yes" and 20 "no" responses.

All the affirmative answers came from community colleges offering both transfer and terminal programs.

Item 4. DO YOU PROVIDE ANY NON-CREDIT COURSES OR PROGRAMS WHICH ARE SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS OR OTHER DISADVANTAGED SOCIAL GROUPS?

To this question there were 3 "yes" and 23 "no" responses.

Fashion Institute of Technology and Broome Technical Community College offer technical and vocational courses for these groups. Nassau Community College will offer a basic education program in the summer of 1965.

Item 5. DO YOU OFFER NON-CREDIT COURSES IN PROFESSIONAL, TECHNICAL, OR VOCATIONAL AREAS DESIGNED FOR PERSONS SEEKING ADDITIONAL JOB TRAINING BUT NOT DEGREE CREDITS?

To this question there were 22 "yes" and 4 "no" responses.

Answers to this question suggest that the public two-year colleges of New York are assuming a definite responsibility for continuing occupational education.

Occupational groups listed as being served by six or more of the 22 colleges answering "yes" included the health professions, business, insurance, real estate, engineers, technicians, apprentice groups, and semi-skilled workers.

Morrisville Agricultural and Technical College reports that it has offered for several years a one-year program for practical nurses and that it is now giving a 30-week or 900 hour cook entry course under the Manpower Training and Development Act.

Item 6. IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" TO QUESTION #5, DO YOU AWARD ANY TYPE OF DIPLOMA OR CERTIFICATE TO STUDENTS COMPLETING AN ORGANIZED PROGRAM CONSISTING OF NON-CREDIT COURSES IN TECHNICAL OR VOCATIONAL AREAS?

To this question there were 14 "yes" and 8 "no" responses.

Colleges reporting that they awarded a diploma or certificate for successful completion of an organized program of non-credit courses were:

Adirondack
Corning
Fashion Institute
Hudson Valley
Jamestown
Borough of Manhattan
Niagara
Orange County
Westchester
Mohawk Valley
Erie County
Morrisville
Alfred
Farmingdale

Item 7. DO YOU OFFER ANY NON-CREDIT COURSES IN THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES FOR ADULT EVENING STUDENTS?

To this question there were 6 "yes" and 20 "no" responses.

It is evident from answers to this item that the institutions studied are providing very few courses of this type. The explanation is probably to be found in the absence of an expressed demand and the fact that credit courses may be serving those with interests in these areas.

Item 8. DO YOU OFFER ANY NON-CREDIT COURSES FOR SPECIAL COMMUNITY GROUPS SUCH AS SENIOR CITIZENS, YOUNG MOTHERS, BOY SCOUT LEADERS, OR OTHER SIMILAR GROUPS?

To this question there were 2 "yes" and 24 "no" responses.

It may be concluded from the answers to this item that the public two-year colleges in New York are not serving this type of community group to the same extent as they are groups with interests in occupational training.

Item 9. ARE MOST OF THE NON-CREDIT COURSES AND PROGRAMS OFFERED AT YOUR INSTITUTION CONDUCTED BY THE EVENING AND EXTENSION DIVISION OR A COMPARABLE OFFICE WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION?

To this question there were 17 "yes" and 4 "no" responses. Four institutions did not reply.

The pattern of responses makes it clear that most non-credit courses and programs are offered through the evening or extension divisions.

Item 10. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THE DEMAND FOR NON-CREDIT COURSES TO BE OFFERED BY YOUR INSTITUTION WILL INCREASE?

To this question there were 25 "yes" responses and one questionnaire with "no" response

More than half of the respondents indicated that they expected an increased demand for courses in technical and vocational education, and in business and related fields. A substantial number also felt that there would be a greater call for remedial courses and for courses designed for personal development.

Item 11. DO YOU THINK THAT TWO-YEAR COLLEGES WILL BE CALLED UPON INCREASINGLY IN THE FUTURE TO DEVELOP AND OFFER TRAINING PROGRAMS WHICH ARE LESS THAN TWO YEARS IN LENGTH AND FOR WHICH THE ASSOCIATE DEGREE IS NOT AWARDED?

To this question there were 24 "yes" and 2 "no" responses. With one of the negative answers was a comment to the effect that the proposed area vocational schools would assume this responsibility.

Item 12. IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" TO QUESTION #11, DO YOU REGARD SUCH A TREND AS DESIRABLE?

To this question there were 21 "yes" and 3 "no" responses.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

From the data included in the 26 questionnaires returned a limited number of conclusions may properly be drawn.

First, the public two-year colleges of New York State are generally willing to accept some responsibility for helping students remove academic deficiencies and acquire necessary study skills in an effort to prepare them for degree-credit courses. This non-credit remedial work is currently limited largely to reading skills development, English, and mathematics. Only a minority of the institutions, however, make such remedial programs available in their regular day sessions; the majority offer them only in evening or summer sessions.

Second, these institutions are not for the most part offering special programs for superior high school students, dropouts, or other identifiable groups with less than a secondary school education.

Third, the great majority of the colleges studied are offering an impressive array of courses and programs designed to provide continuing education for many occupational groups in their communities. The fact that physicians, dentists, nurses, teachers, engineers, real estate brokers, insurance agents, businessmen, technicians, apprentice trainees, and semi-skilled workers are served by these institutions attests to the range of their offerings and their central role in the educational structure of their localities.

Fourth, with more than half of the responding colleges indicating that they award a diploma or certificate for the completion of organized programs of non-credit courses in technical or vocational areas, it appears that these institutions are cognizant of a dual responsibility to serve effectively many segments of their communities while maintaining the integrity and value of the A.A. and A.A.S. degrees. Since awareness of a problem does not always augur its successful

solution, it may be in order for New York's two-year colleges to examine further the criteria employed to distinguish degree-credit from non-degree-credit programs in the technical and vocational areas.

Fifth, most non-credit courses and programs are presented through the evening divisions, extension divisions, or comparable offices rather than through the day divisions of the responding colleges.

Sixth, the principal administrators and academic officers of New York's public two-year colleges anticipate, and look with favor upon, an increased demand for non-credit courses and programs. They see the demand for less-than-two-year training programs in technical and vocational fields as desirable and are apparently prepared to accept responsibility for their development.

In summary, the administrative leaders of these institutions regard the offering of a wide range of non-credit instructional programs as a proper and desirable function of public two-year colleges. An examination of the number and variety of non-credit courses available suggests that the communities served by these colleges expect them to provide a seemingly unlimited array of educational services.

With emerging national policy emphasizing the importance of education as the principal means of solving social problems and insuring economic prosperity, one may look for still more demands upon the public two-year colleges. The Economic Opportunity Act, the Manpower Training and Development Act, federal support for technical and vocational education in post-secondary institutions, and other types of legislation increase the likelihood of the trend continuing.

Although there may be nothing inherently wrong in the position that these colleges should serve practically all community groups requesting educational programs, there certainly are dangers. These relate to planning, staffing, and finances. Unless those guiding an institution's development have a clear view of its purposes and functions and unless these are somewhat stable, there can be no assurance that the necessary facilities and personnel will be available to perform the tasks which have been accepted. This study of non-degree-credit courses and programs offered by New York's public two-year colleges points to the urgency of a careful examination of the capacity of these institutions to provide the educational services which society will undoubtedly be requesting of them.

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APPENDIX

PUBLIC TWO-YEAR COLLEGES IN NEW YORK STATE RETURNING QUESTIONNAIRES

I. STATE UNIVERSITY AGRICULTURAL AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES AT...

Alfred
Canton
Cobleskill
Delhi
Farmingdale
Morrisville

II. COMMUNITY COLLEGES...

Adirondack Community College
Auburn Community College
*Broome Technical Community College
Corning Community College
Dutchess Community College
*Erie County Technical Institute
Fashion Institute of Technology
Fulton-Montgomery Community College
Hudson Valley Community College
Jamestown Community College
Jefferson Community College
Kingsborough Community College
Borough of Manhattan Community College
*Mohawk Valley Community College
Nassau Community College
Niagara Community College
Onondaga Community College
Orange County Community College
Staten Island Community College
*Westchester Community College

*Initially established after World War II as technical institutues.